

Reading Russian Documents: Marriage Records

Russia “How to” Guide, Intermediate Level: Instruction

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GOAL

This guide will teach you:

- Important vocabulary related to marriage records.
- How to read a Russian Orthodox columnar marriage entry.
- How to read a Russian language marriage record for a person in the Russian partition of Poland.

INTRODUCTION

You may want to consult the following “How to” Guides before continuing:

- [Cyrillic Alphabet](#)
- [Cyrillic Script](#)
- Reading Russian Documents: The Alphabet
- Reading Russian Documents: Deciphering the Handwriting and Understanding the Grammar

The table below reflects important vocabulary that you may find in marriage records.

English	Russian
Marriage	брак, бракосочетание
Bride	невеста
Groom	женик
Parents	родители
Witnesses	восприёмники
Daughter	дочь
Son	сын

For additional vocabulary, please see the [Russian Genealogical Word List](#).¹

Place Names and Jurisdictions

The Russian Empire consisted of jurisdictions called *guberni* (singular form: gubernia), *oblasti* (singular form: oblast), *uyezdi* (singular form: uyezd) and *okruga* (singular form: okrug). The European, or Western Russian Empire, was divided into guberni, or states. The guberni were then further subdivided into smaller districts or counties called uyezdi. The Caucasus, Central Asia and Far East areas were also divided into states called oblasti, and counties known as okruga.² There are several variations for the word village or town, as illustrated in the table below.

English	Russian
province/state/gubernia/ oblast	Губерния/область
county/district/uyezd/ okrug	Уезд/округ
village	село, деревня, посад

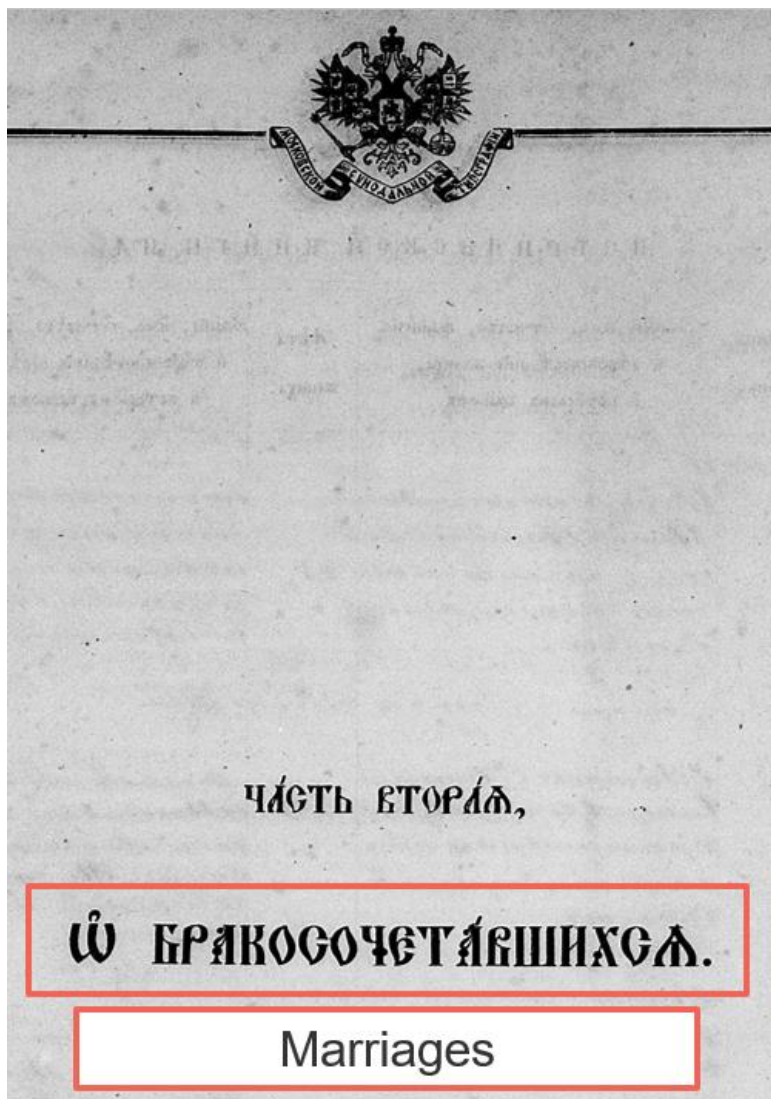
HOW TO

Beginning in 1722, Russian Orthodox churches were required to keep a record of birth, marriage and death records. There was no standardization until 1806, when a printed form was established. In 1838, the form was revised slightly and remained in use until the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917/1918.³ This guide will teach you how to read the form used between 1838 and 1917/1918.

¹ "Russian Genealogical Word List," *FamilySearch Wiki* (<http://familysearch.org/wiki>).

² Sergei G. Pushkarev, *Dictionary of Russian Historical Terms from the Eleventh Century to 1917*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970); 28, 69, 74, 167.

³ "Russia Church Records," *FamilySearch Wiki* (<http://familysearch.org/wiki>).



Look for a Cover Page


Orthodox Church books are often organized by year and subcategorized by record type – birth, marriage and death. Cover pages mark the separation of birth, marriage, and death records. To the left is an example of a cover page for marriage records. The year may be written on the cover page for marriage records, or it may be written in the preceding section, in this case, births.

Although this and the headings found within the church books will be written in Church Slavonic, you do NOT need to know how to read Church Slavonic to read an Orthodox marriage record. Translations of column headings are provided for you below, and the entries will be written in handwritten Cyrillic script.

Column Headings

Russian Orthodox Church books consist of a left and right page. Translations of the column headings are provided below.

24005




Metrical book for the [year of]					
Number	Date	Standing, name, patronymic, surname and religion of the groom and # of marriages	Groom's age	Standing, name, patronymic, surname and religion of the bride, and # of marriages	Bride's age
33	29.	Александр Иванович Мухоморов, православный, первый брак. —	33 л.	Евдокия Александровна Мухоморова, православная, первый брак. 26 л.	
		Венерная супруга: Мария Ивановна			

The number column is the xth marriage in that year.

In the date column, if you do not find the month written above the numeric date, check the entries above. The name of the month may be written at the top of the page, or at the beginning of a new month.

241. 2



С Д Е Л А, Ч А С Т Ь Т О Р А Я, О Б Р А К О С О Ч Е Т А Н И Х С Я.

Who performed the marriage	Witnesses	Signature of the witnesses, optional
<p>с тоятели</p> <p>и, елики</p> <p>коринъ</p>	<p>Посенная: Самарский ищущий</p> <p>Александр Павлович Родников изво</p> <p>данный въ службу армии в гвардейской</p> <p>Андрей Павлович Родников. По</p> <p>длинному списку Самарский ищущий</p> <p>Павел Александрович Родников.</p> <p>и Александр Павлович Родков.</p>	

The final column is optional and is often left blank.

Paragraph Form (In Russian Partition of Poland)

To learn how to read a Polish marriage record written in Russian, please see the [Reading Russian Marriage Records \(In Poland\) "How to" Guide](#).⁴

⁴ "Reading Russian Marriage Records (In Poland)," FamilySearch Wiki, Russia "How to" Guides (<http://familysearch.org/wiki>).